

Economic Resiliency Task Force
Meeting Minutes
September 30 & October 1, 2020

PRESENT:

John Powell
Jessie Olsen
Councillor Joanne Kirby
Jerrilyn Schembri
Mila Lansdowne
Sue Kenny
Fran Haughian
Sherri-Lynn Hewitt
David Durrant

ABSENT:

Mayor Keith Bertrand
Councillor Will Howe
Ronke Solomon
Tim Croston
Helen Scott

1. Call to Order: 9:02 / 3:02

2. Approval of Agenda: Joanne & Mila

3. Approval of September 2, 2020 Minutes: Joanna & John

4. Business arising from the minutes: All in attendance were in favor monthly meetings (with a focus on action items) unless there is an emergency item to discuss with the group.

5. Wednesday Meeting:

- Business walk happened yesterday (Sept 29th) the group visited the businesses downtown and the commercial park. Some pretty positive notes and good ideas, with some quick fixes along with some referrals for mayor and council that would support local businesses. Important on these walks that we show that we are there to support them, hear what is working and what isn't. Got a lot of good information that will help form a good report. Sue reports that there was a lot more positivity than the last time this was done about 4-5 years ago. Joanne – a question that could have been asked, if the business could survive through another wave if the business taxes were put back in. Also a note about the business tax not being passed down from the owners of the business to the actual people that are running the business in town. No benefit to the community if the owners do not live in town and do not pass down the savings to the local business operators. Maybe something to think about for a second wave, a different way to address it for the local businesses that rent rather than own the property. Suggestion of a sign for the industrial park advertising what businesses are in the industrial park. Business signs at the ball diamonds were also mentioned – need to investigate. Continuing with visiting businesses this week and moving onto focus on home based businesses as well from Oct 1-9. Fran and Sue will be the main interviewers for the deeper drive conversations. Trailheads and trail washrooms did get brought up on the business walk as well, important to have the infrastructure and amenities to support the tourism numbers.

6. Thursday Meeting:

- Review of Wednesday's discussion about the business walk and conversations.

- Sherri-lynn brought up a suggestion to also do a follow-up/check-in with residents. How are families adapting going to back to school/are they homeschooling/if so then why? Are they now lacking supports that they may not have access to now that their kids are not in school? Are they going to face more challenges with CERB ending?

- Discussion about essential workers from the USA coming to Tumbler Ridge. David brought up that workers are coming here, that should be self-isolating for 14 days and are potentially posing a threat to the community if they are not following the Covid protocols. Meikle Wind has strict Covid rules on site and it is frustrating to see those same workers out in the community. Pattern has lost revenue because of making the decision to have turbines down rather than bring in essential workers from the states. Could an arrangement be made, with Trend for example, to have these workers there while keeping them out of the community as much as possible? For example, having them only leave to go to work on a turbine and then directly back to their room, having food and other supplies brought to their room rather than have them out shopping in the community. Could this be a community discussion about essential workers? Or is this a direct business to business discussion? In terms of resiliency – should these workers even be coming in to our community? This also leads into the discussion about mask policies and whether local businesses should be making their own policies to require masks in their businesses.

- David brought an idea to have the local youth to champion a cause relating to Covid/resiliency – to come up with a creative and interesting new idea. Sherri-lynn says it has been impressive how well the students are adapting and are very eager to learn this year, she will bring this to the students and see what ideas they can come up with focused on building community spirit while following Covid protocols. Would be great to have the students come up with the next big project and be able to bring that to Mayor and Council.

7. Adjournment: 9:48 / 4:15

8. Next meetings:

- 9am, Wednesday 14 October, 2020
- 3:30pm, Thursday 15 October, 2020